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ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, 1793.

By SAMUEL HAYES, A. M.

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TO
SIR GEORGE JACKSON, BART. M. P. CHAIRMAN,

AND

THE OTHER LOYAL MEMBERS

OF

THE ASSOCIATION

IN

THE PARISH OF ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER,

THIS SERMON

(PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST)

IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR MOST OBEDIENT,

AND

MOST FAITHFUL SERVANT,

SAMUEL HAYES.

Hammer Smith,
Feb. 8, 1793-

®

OF

BY GEORGE JACKSON, ESQ. M.P.

AND

THE OTHER MEMBERS

OF

THE ASSOCIATION

IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

IN DEBATE

(PRINTED BY THE ASSOCIATION)



BY

AND

FOR THE ASSOCIATION

PRINTED BY THE ASSOCIATION

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S E R M O N, &c.

ROMANS xiii. 1.

LET EVERY SOUL BE SUBJECT UNTO THE HIGHER POWERS.

AMONG the various modes of fallacy and deception, that have often been practised with success, I am led by the words of the text to advert to one in particular; namely, to guard you against those arts which are employed by interested and ambitious men, for the purpose of alienating the affections of their brethren from the obedience due to their temporal governors.

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This is a subject, which, from its evident importance, merits our serious attention, whether we consider it as Christians or as social beings. It is a subject peculiarly interesting at the present time, when attempts to weaken the bonds of allegiance, and disseminate seditious principles, have been so open and daring, that the supreme power has deemed it expedient to adopt public and unusual measures for the safety of the State.

If we subscribe to the authority of human government, in deference to the Gospel of Christ, we are no less prompted to it by motives of temporal interest; and should cheerfully submit, from a conviction that the submission, recommended by the Apostle, can alone support the welfare of society. He that allows this admits the two strongest arguments that can be supposed capable of exercising and determining the judgement of rational agents. He will of course comply, if he either sincerely wishes for the rewards of eternity, or is truly desirous of leading *a quiet and peaceable life*.

The precept of Saint Paul, then, may be divided into two branches, both of them objects that merit a deliberate discussion. First, that we are obligated to be obedient to our lawful Rulers *for the Lord's sake*; that is, in acquiescence with the positive mandate of him whom we acknowledge to be the Author and Finisher
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of our Faith. Secondly, that the obligation is farther confirmed by the important influence which subjection to the higher powers must ever have upon the dearest interests of society.

I will, therefore, order my discourse according to this arrangement, and endeavour to convince you, as Christians and men, how necessary it is to submit to legal ordinances, both in compliance with your religious duty, and for the prosecution of your temporal good.

In perusing the history of our Saviour, as it is recorded in the sacred writings, we do not meet with a single instance of opposition to the Roman Magistrates; not one attempt, either to invalidate their power by his own personal efforts, or to infuse the spirit of resistance into others by eloquent exhortations. Though possessed of perfect innocence, which precluded all just suspicions of iniquitous views; though endued with knowledge that could intuitively point out the most certain measures, and invested with ability competent to crown them with complete success; notwithstanding this full combination of effective means, he never presumed, during the whole course of his ministry upon earth, to interfere with the claims, or dispute the decisions of civil authority, but left its rights and privileges where he found them. He was perpetually solicited by the Jews to assume the

trappings of royalty, yet he uniformly rejected their pressing invitations; and when, upon one occasion, they would have forced regal honours upon him, he privately withdrew himself. At another time, the Pharisees, eager to get an opportunity of satiating their malice, put this question to him, *Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?* They imagined, that this insidious address would induce him, either to flatter the Roman Emperor, in opposition to the liberty and religion of the Jews, by answering in the affirmative, or to draw upon himself the indignation of the Romans, by denying the legality of it. But his reply evaded both these inferences. *Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.*

Such was the conduct and such the sentiments of our Lord, concerning legal subordination. Nor were his Disciples remiss in imitating the divine example; for, no oppression could stimulate them to retaliate upon their vindictive Tyrants by rebellious resistance. And they were no less zealous to impress similar sentiments of forbearance upon the minds of others by the additional force of frequent admonitions. The chapter, from which my text is taken, is explicit on this head. Nay, so very pointed, so minutely accurate, are their precepts, in this article of submission to our superiors, that they are not restricted to the regulation of our demeanour

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towards Rulers appointed by the State; they extend to every condition of life, and embrace all the departments of subordination, that originate from the various degrees of connection in which domestic union hath placed the sons of men.

From this brief but I hope satisfactory statement of the subject to a Christian audience, we may clearly see, that obedience to earthly governors is a duty imposed upon us by the Gospel of Christ, inculcated both by his precepts, and those of his Apostles. He, therefore, that, without adequate cause, disavows allegiance, and refuses to submit to the ordinances of man, violates a fundamental principle of his religion. Of course, he renders himself obnoxious to the indignation of that Saviour, by whose acceptance alone he can inherit eternal life.

The second point of view, in which I proposed to consider the subject, was, the connection between the submission prescribed by the Apostle, and our present welfare; to demonstrate how intimately the latter is blended with the former.

Were men a race of perfect beings—Did the strong never oppress the weak, the opulent never tyrannize over the poor, nor the artful employ their superior skill

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in circumventing the simplicity of ignorance, the utility of laws would be superseded. For, why should penal statutes be enacted, when no necessity required such coercions? Why should the wisdom of legislators be called forth to make provisions against imaginary evils? — But, alas! this harmonious scene of tranquillity and happiness is not to be found upon earth. However flattering the descriptions may be, which have been exhibited of a state of nature, they are to be considered rather as the warm effusions of fancy than the sober representations of attainable felicity; rather as the abstracted flights of enthusiasm than the calm deliberate result of truth and reason. It appears, from the manifold discoveries made by ancient and modern navigators, that a state of savage nature is a state of ceaseless hostility. It is so far from being the enviable residence of comfort and security, that incessant toil is required to obviate the miseries of famine, and incessant vigilance to guard against the incursions of ferocious enemies. A consciousness of these inevitable disasters induced men to form themselves into social communities; to enact laws that might perpetuate public harmony, and to enforce obedience to them by punishments suited to the criminality of the respective delinquents. They abridged themselves, therefore, of their natural claim to full liberty, that their security might rest upon a firmer basis. They voluntarily submitted to legal restrictions, that
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the primary objects of life might not be exposed to the humours of caprice, nor depend wholly upon the arbitrary determinations of the strong and powerful.

When the ties of government are dissolved, and its sanctions treated with contempt and defiance, what is there to hinder our relapsing into that precarious, that miserable state, from which civilization had freed us? Amidst the storms of anarchy and confusion, the voice of justice is drowned, and the claims of humanity are disregarded. Men order their actions in this tumultuous conflict, not according to the dictates of equity and reason, but from the impulse of ambition, or the partial suggestions of private emolument.

Such have been, and, in general, ever must be, the melancholy consequences of national sedition. And, as human nature is but too prone to depravity and vice, there will always be men, in every kingdom, ready to kindle the flames of discord, and as zealous afterwards to expand them into one common conflagration. The indolent will become incendiaries, from the hope of seizing that in a moment, which they could not otherwise expect to procure without the painful efforts of tedious labour. The avaricious will be animated by the prospect of plunder, the ambitious by the splendours of
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pre-eminence, and the envious by the uncharitable satisfaction of exulting in the overthrow of others.

How strongly, then, doth it behove all who value their own peace, or that of society, to prevent the admission of such serious calamities ! And since there are so many motives that may combine to generate and diffuse dissention, we cannot be too circumspect in adhering to that line of conduct which may frustrate the devices of the seditious. If even the pure and peaceable religion of Christ hath been employed to justify persecution and murder, we need not wonder that civil liberty should be prostituted to similar purposes. The venerable term operates like a charm upon the mind. It excites zeal which no opposition can extinguish, and infuses resolution which no dangers can appal. This strong, this innate desire of freedom is the powerful engine by which abandoned and interested men have been enabled to subvert the foundations of established governments, and raise themselves upon the ruins of their country.

There is one species of delusion, drawn from this fertile source of error, concerning which, as it has been much recommended and enforced of late by modern philosophers, I shall say a few words ; namely, the doctrine that all men are equal. The assertion, indeed, is highly

highly flattering to the major part of mankind. It exalts them above the level on which they are placed, and imparts to them a degree of consequence, of which, perhaps, they entertained no previous idea.

Let us, however, for a moment suppose this boasted system of equality adopted. There are many circumstances that must render its permanent existence practically impossible. The discussion of a few of them will be sufficient for my present purpose.

Disparity of soil and situation will introduce great, and we may affirm, insuperable difficulties in adjusting the several portions of landed property. For, I believe, it will require more skill and more local knowledge than any man ever possessed, to divide a country among its inhabitants with such accuracy of measure and quality, as to silence the murmurs of discontent, and preclude all future contention. We are, in general, apt to undervalue our own possessions, when compared with those of others, and to look with disgust upon our own condition, when we view the brighter side of theirs. What can prevent the operation of similar emotions in this case? He that hath less, on account of the natural richness of his allotment, may envy him whose district is more extensive; and the latter, at the same time, may think his own superiority in quantity of trifling importance

tance, while he contemplates the superior fertility, or pleasantness, of his neighbour's division. On this principle, therefore, it is probable that discontent will be excited. Here is a wide field opened, at the very commencement of the business, for envy and strife, and we know that, *where envying strife is, there is confusion and every evil work* *.

But, even if these effects should be counteracted by the attachment of individuals to the virtues of peace and moderation, the system must be soon overturned, or rendered defective, by other causes.

The influence of the various seasons may operate partially. A genial and proportionate mixture of rain and sun will make one district productive, while a superfluity or a deprivation of either shall intercept the expected harvest of another. And since man cannot dispense the necessary supply, as exigencies may require, it will be impossible for him to obviate the disorders that must flow from an unequal distribution of it.

Industry and indolence, also, will quickly constitute an essential difference between the members of the community. The active and the diligent will, by the na-

* James iii. v. 16.

tural process of toil and assiduity, reap the blessings of abundance. On the other hand, the lands of the slothful will be over-run with weeds, and become incapable of furnishing the requisite fruits for the support of their several proprietors. And as indolence is generally attended by the love of pleasure and dissipation, when the voluptuous find themselves abridged of their usual gratifications, they will be tempted to seek a temporary resource in the sale of their property, which must, consequently, be transferred to those industrious and provident persons who shall be able to purchase it. By these means a speedy termination will be put to the existence of this happy equality. Nor can it be restored, but by a cession of the well-earned rewards of virtue and labour to the profligate and the indolent. Such a sacrifice few, if any, would willingly make. And to extort it by the hand of violence would be so flagrant a breach of common justice, that it must eventually subvert the very foundations of civil happiness. For, who will be found active in the departments of necessary toil, if there be no security that industry shall reap and enjoy the merited profits?—They, indeed, whose present fortunes are desperate, and whose future prospects are brightened by no probable hopes of amendment, may endeavour to propagate these delusive doctrines, from an idea that their own interest will be promoted by the adoption of them. But, I trust, there is virtue and wisdom enough.

enough in this country to frustrate the malignant and poisonous tendency of all such endeavours. No rational equality can exist in a state of society, except the equal administration of distributive justice. And, as we enjoy that glorious privilege in a degree hitherto envied by other nations, it would be the height of folly to renounce its exalted and real benefits, for the casual operation of fanciful theories. Finally, let us consider, that in embracing and enforcing these wild opinions, we actually wage war against the arrangements of divine Providence. For, had our Creator intended us for this state of equality, he would undoubtedly have made the means correspond with the end, by assigning to all men equal endowments both of body and mind. And were it possible, or expedient for us, to attain it in the present circumstances of our nature, a Being invested with perfect wisdom, and actuated by infinite goodness, would hardly have left his creatures destitute of the requisite admonitions on so important a point.

But it may be asked, Are we then bound to passive, to abject compliance in all circumstances? Must we suffer extreme oppression without resistance, and groan under the weight of wanton tyranny, without any endeavours to shake off the yoke?—There may be critical seasons of national peril, when opposition to the ruling powers becomes virtuous, because there is no other al-

ternative to be embraced for the preservation of our highest, our unalienable privileges. To deny this, would be to libel that happy constitution which our forefathers established by combating the virulence of bigotry, and the menaces of arbitrary power. Yet, however justifiable an appeal to the sword may be, when the disease, like a mortal wound, requires a prompt and desperate remedy, it is a mode of redress not to be hazarded, except in a crisis of similar danger. For, when the waves of civil tumult are raised by the tempest, no one can say to them with effect, *Thus far shall ye come, and no farther.*

This remark cannot but strike us, when we turn to the annals of our own history. Much more forcibly will it appeal to our feelings, when we contemplate the awful gloom, which at this moment overspreads the face of Europe. We see a once great and flourishing kingdom, a prey to misery and distraction, unsupported by any, but menaced by some, and openly encountered by other formidable nations.—A region, once the envied residence of urbanity and politeness, the degraded, turbulent seat of ferocity and barbarism; and a Christian country, the polluted spot, where infidelity and atheism have dared, even in the eighteenth century of the Gospel of heavenly light, to avow their irreligious sentiments. Lastly, we behold a Prince, friendly to the liberties

liberties of his people, and studious of their happiness beyond any of his predecessors; a Prince who had made concessions to his subjects, which, at any preceding period, would have been hailed with transports of gratitude, and rewarded with the loyal services of unshaken love and fidelity—We behold this merciful, this beneficent and liberal Monarch treated with every mark of indignity, insult, and contempt, driven from his throne, as if he had been a ferocious sanguinary tyrant, imprisoned like a felon who had perpetrated the most flagitious crimes, and publicly consigned to an unmerited death by the refuse of his own and other countries.

Many of those, undoubtedly, who were the primary cause of this stupendous revolution, acted from pure principles of public virtue, and aimed at nothing farther than that which every friend to humanity and freedom wished to see accomplished*, the establishment of a rational and manly liberty, by a temperate circumscription of the regal prerogative.

The subsequent scenes of confiscation, rapine, and massacre, scenes that would disgrace even hordes of savages, will stand recorded as a solemn lesson to all nations, by shewing how precipitate the transition is from

* Ab abusu ad usum, non valet consequentia.

rebellious turbulence to all the miseries of anarchy, licentiousness, and insecurity. They ought to be such to us in a peculiar degree. For, if we are conscious that we possess much, we should at the same time consider, that we have also much to lose.

Let us not be deceived, then, by the false statements of factious prejudice, nor deluded by the specious, but impracticable, theories of atheistical philosophy. *They that are whole need no physician.* And as it would be madness for a person in sound health, to endanger the stability of it by the wanton application of superfluous medicines, it must be equally so for us to endanger those national blessings which we have long enjoyed, by the trial of fanciful innovations.

Divine Providence hath hitherto distinguished these realms by signal marks of its favour and protection. If we acknowledge that our security and happiness are to be ascribed to the interposing arm of Heaven, we must likewise acknowledge that their duration will depend upon the sincere performance of our duty to God, because all our hopes of temporal prosperity rest on the grace and assistance of that Being, who alone *stilleth the raging of the sea, and the noise of his waves, and the madness of the people. Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty; He shall*

shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter, and from the noisome pestilence. Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day—for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day. A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee. There shall no evil happen unto thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

